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Stark County Law Library Association

September 2006

BEGINNERS

APRI

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works! TRY IT!!**

The American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) located at <<http://www.ndaa-apri.org/apri/index.html>> on the Web was developed in 1984 by the National District Attorneys Association. as “a non-profit national clearinghouse for information on the prosecutorial function, as well as a research and program-development resource for prosecutors at all levels of government.”¹

Access to comprehensive justice, medical and scientific data resources, including a nationwide network of working prosecutors, ensures that information provided by APRI is up-to-date, grounded in practicality, and accurate. APRI staff further conducts research on a broad range of criminal justice issues that are of interest to prosecutors. This can range from assessing the impact of new legislation on the prosecutor’s office, to the effectiveness of various programs and sentencing alternatives, to office management and organization.²

The major program areas of the APRI include, among other topics, "Child Abuse and Exploitation," "Community Prosecution," "DNA Forensics," "Drug Prosecution and Prevention," "Gun Violence Prosecution," "Violence Against Women," and "White Collar Crime."

Each area contains information for visitors including an overview of the topic, news, CLE information, related publications, and links to other sites for further information. Legal researchers will appreciate the Institute's "Publications" section, organized by topic, which is a good source of in-depth and free documentation and resource guides. The "Research" section offers information about prosecution and criminal justice policies and programs, including a detailed section on empirical research. The APRI site is searchable.³

The Institute publishes twelve newsletters. All are available online, mostly in PDF format, from

BEGINNER**APRI (Cont.)**

the first publication to the present issue. Titles include: APRI Highlights; Between the Lines (Traffic Law); Building Bridges (Community Prosecution); Half a Nation (state and national Finding Words courses); In Re...(Juvenile Justice); Reasonable Efforts (Child

Protection); Swift & Certain (Gun Violence Prosecution); The Informant (Drug Prosecution and Prevention); The Silent Witness (DNA Forensics); and The Voice (Violence Against Women); and Update (Child Abuse).

INTERMEDIATE**People Finder Guide**

The People Finder Guide <<http://www.virtualchase.com/people/index.html>> is a part of the Virtual Chase Website of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP.

This guide will help you find online sources of public records as well as other Web-based people finding tools. When searching public records such as court filings, property records or the records of a government agency, understand that you will often find details in the supporting paper documentation, which is not available

online. According to BRB Publications' Public Records Online, 5th edition, only 35% of public records are available online, and many of these contain insufficient information for verification purposes. Moreover, data in public records online is often erroneous. To be certain you have found information about the right person, you should verify it with the source (court or government agency).⁴

This comprehensive site provides links to many useful tools in five categories:

INTERMEDIATE Where Was That? (Cont.)

- Public Records and Public Information at <http://www.virtualchase.com/people/intro_public_records.html> includes tools for finding public records and sources of public records. More Actual Sources of Public Records and Public Information are available at <http://www.virtualchase.com/topics/sources_public_records.shtml>, and Criminal Records by State are at <http://www.virtualchase.com/topics/criminal_records_state.shtml>.
- Reverse Telephone Directories are located at <<http://www.virtualchase.com/people/reverse.html>>.
- White Pages and Telephone Directories are located at <http://www.virtualchase.com/people/white_pages.html>.
- Finding Email Addresses at <<http://www.virtualchase.com/people/email.html>> and
- White Pages Outside of the U.S. at <http://www.virtualchase.com/people/outside_us.html>.

ADVANCED Uses of Metadata



Metadata is very useful. How it is manipulated can be even more useful. “Metadata is both evidence and a key to validating and understanding other evidence. Either way, it's discoverable when potentially relevant.”⁶

It [metadata] is the electronic equivalent of DNA, ballistics and finger-

print evidence, with a comparable power to exonerate and incriminate. Metadata sheds light on the context, authenticity, reliability and dissemination of electronic evidence, as well as providing clues to human behavior.⁷

“... [The] metadata in your opponent's documents is important not just because it might



ADVANCED

Uses of Metadata (Cont.)

reveal an edit or change that's damaging to their case, the underlying metadata -- in e-mail, for example -- will also show information on when the mail was sent, who received it, and the path it took. This will help to reconstruct the chain of communication on a particular issue.”⁸

“Family Advocate” (Winter 2006) contains an article that “discussing a divorce case where a mother lost child custody in part because of a disturbing series of e-mails she sent to the father... A court-ordered forensic examination of the father's computer revealed that he had set up a system to ‘spoof’ e-mails so that the incriminating e-mails which appeared to be coming from her had actually been written by him. The custody order was quickly reversed.”⁹

Even the most innocuous metadata available in any word processing document can be problematic in someone else's hands.

There are many examples of problems caused by this simple information. Someone might find that the document was created by another law firm, created for another client, created and worked on by someone other than whose name shows up on your bill, and worked on for much less time than the hours shown on the bill.¹⁰

Mining electronic documents can reveal a history of exchanges that will bring to light other potential defendants or witnesses in a case. But word processing documents and e-mail are not the only sources of informative metadata. Spreadsheets in a pricing or wage case can be mined to reveal the formulas behind the calculations.

Metadata and the related business of e-discovery are becoming increasingly more important considerations in the legal world, and with them come muddled ethical considerations and conflicts of ideas. We will consider some of these problems in next month's info@.

FOOTNOTES

- ^{1 & 3} “APRI: American Prosecutors Research Institute.” InSITE. Vol. 11, no. 18. 15 May 2006. Cornell Law Library. 26 July 2006. <<http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/library/RESOURCES/insite.htm>>.
- ² “What Is the American Prosecutors Research Institute?” APRI: American Prosecutors Research Institute. Copyright © 2001-2006. American Prosecutors Research Institute. 28 July 2006. <<http://www.ndaa-apri.org/apri/about/index.html>>.
- ⁴ “People Finder Guide.” The Virtual Chase. 27 June 2006. Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP. 31 July 2006. <<http://www.virtualchase.com/people/index.html>>.
- ⁵ Collins, Tom. “Law Firm E-Mail Gone Wrong.” morepartnerincome. 2 August 2006. Juris, Inc. 3 August 2006. <http://www.morepartnerincome.com/blog/_archives/2006/8/2/2158480.html>.
- ^{6 & 7} Ball, Craig. Make Friends With Metadata. Legal Technology. 26 January 2006. Law.com. 8 August 2006. <<http://www.law.com/jsp/legaltechnology/pubArticleLTN.jsp?id=1138183510640>>.
- ^{8 & 10} Kennedy, Dennis, Evan Schaeffer and Tom Mighell. “Mining the Value from Metadata.” Thinking E-Discovery. January 2006. Discovery Resources. 8 August 2006. <http://www.discoveryresources.org/04_om_thinkingED_0601.html>.
- ⁹ Calloway, Jim. “The Mysteries (and Magic) of Metadata.” Jim Calloway’s Law Practice Tips Blog, 30 January 2006. Typepad. 8 August 2006. <<http://jimcalloway.typepad.com/lawpracticetips/confidentiality/index.html>>.

By Nancy Stinson, MLS nancy@starklawlibrary.org
